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preliminary list*

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

CONCLUSION OF EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ASSURE NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES AGAINST THE USE OR THREAT OF USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 8 June 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the Chinese, Arabic, English, French and Russian texts of a statement released on 8 June 1996 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (see annexes).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 66, 69 and 71 of the preliminary list.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) WANG Xuexian
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the People's Republic of China
to the United Nations

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

China conducted a nuclear test on 8 June 1996.

China stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, and is in favour of bringing about a comprehensive nuclear-test ban in the process of working towards that goal. As early as October of 1993, the Chinese Government publicly announced that China advocates the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) no later than 1996. Since then, the Chinese delegation has taken an active part in the CTBT negotiations in Geneva. China will continue to work with other countries for the conclusion, by the end of this year, of a fair, reasonable and verifiable treaty with universal adherence and unlimited duration.

The small quantity of nuclear weapons China possesses is solely for the purpose of self-defence, and does not constitute a threat to any country. China has unilaterally and solemnly renounced the first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances. It has also made a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. At the same time, China strongly calls upon other nuclear-weapon States to respond positively to China's initiative by immediately concluding, through negotiations, a treaty on mutual non-first-use of nuclear weapons, and by reaching an unconditional agreement not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In the world today, there still exist huge nuclear arsenals and the threat of a nuclear war caused by the first use of nuclear weapons. Under these conditions, in order to safeguard the highest interests of the State and the nation, China cannot but conduct a minimal number of necessary nuclear tests. We have always exercised utmost restraint in conducting nuclear tests, and the number of tests we have conducted has been extremely limited.

Together with the Governments and peoples of the world's other countries, the Chinese Government and people will work unremittingly and do their utmost to attain the lofty goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date, and to maintain lasting peace and universal security.

On the basis of the aforementioned position, the Chinese Government hereby announces that before September of this year, China will again conduct a nuclear test to ensure the safety of its nuclear weapons, and will observe a moratorium on nuclear testing thereafter.